What Impact Could Brexit Really Have on UK Tourism?
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Due to the economic uncertainty of a post-Brexit Britain, the UK will be forced to seek new opportunities outside the EU across all industries. This includes tourism and leisure which is a major player for the UK economy, worth a staggering £127 billion and responsible for 1.6 million jobs.

With this in mind, we have analysed the facts and figures for UK tourism and asked: What impact could Brexit really have on UK tourism?

Figures by Visit Britain in 2015 reveal that 80% of the top ten visiting countries to the UK are from the EU. In order to appeal to a global market, businesses within the tourism and leisure industry must change their approach to digital, ensuring that they engage with a wider audience.

As well as still appealing to those in the UK, we look further afield to one of the largest growing markets; China. We seek to find out what the UK is doing to encourage an increase in Chinese tourism, and more importantly, is it enough?
The UK has an extraordinary heritage and a strong passion for contemporary culture, enticing millions of tourists from all over the world, year on year.

Despite the results of the EU referendum, Britain has continued to enjoy record breaking numbers of visitors, helped by the pound dropping to its lowest level in over 30 years. So, why the unexpected boost to the UK’s tourism industry? Can this be maintained? Can the tourism and leisure industry reach forecasts of 38.1 million visits by the end of 2017?

In this report we look at the historical trends in the UK travel and leisure industry, the implications from a post-Brexit Britain, and what new opportunities lie in the digital sphere and the industry as a whole.
The UK Travel & Leisure Industry
As the 7th largest export earner, the tourism industry is one of the UK’s largest contributors to the economy, equal to the automotive and pharmaceutical industries.

“Worth a staggering £126.9 billion and responsible for 1.6 million jobs at all entry levels throughout the UK, tourism is a major player for Britain’s economy”

— CEO of Visit Britain, Sally Balcombe
In 2015, the UK saw 36.1 million visits, with inbound tourists spending a reported £22.1 billion. At the start of 2016, projections predicted a 1.5% increase in visitors, with an expenditure of £22.3 billion.

Full figures for 2016 inbound and domestic tourism will be released early 2017. However, official reports would indicate that the UK received 36.7 million visits, with total expenditure figures yet to be released.
1.1: Staycations on the Rise

According to figures released by Visit England, the UK spent a record-breaking £45.3 billion on domestic trips across England in the first 11 months of 2016.

The first four months of 2016 saw particularly high numbers of domestic holiday trips in England, with 11 million trips taken from January to April 2016 - an 8% increase from the same period in 2015. England saw a significant increase in overnight domestic trips now at 7.2 million. Spend on overnight holidays also rose 23% to £1.8 billion.

Following the EU referendum, the value of the pound dropped 10% against the Euro from 1.31 to 1.15, which resulted in European holidays dramatically increasing in price. This saw huge implications for UK holiday makers preferring to opt for a staycation.

Data released by travel comparison site Travel Supermarket unveiled how a family of four holiday to a Eurozone would set British holiday makers back £245 more than it would have prior to the EU referendum.

According to Visit England, staycations were already on the rise prior to Brexit, with a recordbreaking 7.3 million people holidaying in England in the first quarter of 2016.

Fast forward to the August bank holiday weekend, the UK saw just over 5 million Britons plan a staycation - a 6% increase on 2015 figures within the same time period.
1.2: Inbound UK Tourism & Expenditure

There has been little change in the top visiting countries to the UK, specifically the top four countries who have remained the same since 2011. These are:

1. France
2. US
3. Germany
4. Republic of Ireland.

In 2015, French residents topped the table for the most visits to the UK, and it’s likely that this will be the reported case of 2016, as France have remained top of the table each year since 2008.
## 1.2: Inbound UK Tourism & Expenditure

The top 10 visiting countries in 2015 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 10 inbound markets for the UK by volume (2015)</th>
<th>Visits (000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. France</td>
<td>4,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. USA</td>
<td>3,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Germany</td>
<td>3,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Republic of Ireland</td>
<td>2,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Spain</td>
<td>2,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Netherlands</td>
<td>1,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Italy</td>
<td>1,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Poland</td>
<td>1,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Belgium</td>
<td>1,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Australia</td>
<td>1,043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2: Inbound UK Tourism & Expenditure

The top 10 territories contributed 53% of all spending in the UK. However, the US is worth £1.5 billion more than the second most popular market: France.

In 2015, China and Saudi Arabia entered the top 10 by expenditure for the first time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 10 inbound markets for the UK by value (2015)</th>
<th>Value (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. USA</td>
<td>£3,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. France</td>
<td>£1,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Germany</td>
<td>£1,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Australia</td>
<td>£1,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Spain</td>
<td>£999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Republic of Ireland</td>
<td>£934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Italy</td>
<td>£890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Netherlands</td>
<td>£676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. China</td>
<td>£586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>£556</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2: Inbound UK Tourism & Expenditure

Following the EU referendum and the sudden decrease of the pound, inbound visitors to the UK dramatically increased.

According to holiday search engine CheapFlights, the few days following the referendum saw flight searches to the UK from the US more than double.

Mirroring this data, online travel agency Opodo reported a 38% increase in searches for flights to the UK from US markets and a 20% increase from Asian territories.

Searches to the UK increased

61% by China

31% by Europe as a whole

49% by Canada
1.3: UK Regional Performances

Inbound Expenditure

Many UK regions offer a number of different tourist attractions which are promoted by effective marketing strategies. However, there are many UK regions that are underdeveloped in this respect.

According to figures by Visit Britain, the top 10 UK locations that attract the highest volumes of inbound tourism are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town/city</th>
<th>Visits (000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. London</td>
<td>18,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Edinburgh</td>
<td>1,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Manchester</td>
<td>1,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Birmingham</td>
<td>1,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Glasgow</td>
<td>662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Liverpool</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Oxford</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Bristol</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Brighton / Hove</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Cambridge</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To address the sheer imbalance of tourists visiting London only, the Government have launched a £40 million fund action plan to encourage overseas tourists to travel beyond the Capital.

The plan seeks to encourage new tourism outside London to ease travel around Britain, helping inbound visitors as well as domestic travellers explore the wealth of tourism opportunities across the country.

The first grants from the £40 million Discover England Fund have been awarded to projects and organisations in different geographic areas to join up and create offers that can attract tourism outside of London.

Companies and projects awarded with the extra funding will typically have a strong cultural or sporting allurement, from music festivals to championship golf courses and world-class cuisine establishments.

The Government launched this initiative alongside its Tourism Action Plan; a series of new initiatives and measures which it claims will help Britain outcompete other major tourist destinations. This will see the UK welcome more international visitors and accommodate the rise in staycations.
These new initiatives include:

- Sensible regulation changes such as allowing B&Bs to pick up visitors from train stations and to offer a welcome drink upon arrival.
- Addressing the seasonal nature of the industry by providing a flexible apprenticeship scheme that allows training to be completed over a 16-18-month window as opposed to 12 (breaks included).
- Making travel easier with a new GREAT tourism rail offer, including five new easy to book rail itineraries to help tourists seamlessly travel around the UK.

The work is supported by industry partners, including a £10.2m partnership between Expedia and Visit Britain to market the UK to overseas territories including key markets; USA, Germany & France.
The Brexit Effect on British Tourism
2.1: The Implications of a Post-Brexit Britain

In 2017, Britain is expected to see the biggest rise in tourism spend in four years and a surge in visitor numbers, with overseas visitors expected to contribute £24.1 billion, up 8% on figures from 2016.

One of the biggest risks in meeting the tourism projections for 2017 lies in the uncertainty of a post-Brexit Britain. Whilst the pound continues to decrease in value, the UK may continue to attract inbound visitors wishing to take advantage of favourable exchange rates.

According to figures released by Visit Britain in July 2016, there is a strong indication that the exchange rate could act as an alluring net incentive for inbound leisure visitors to come to Britain. This can be seen in the way that visitor figures grew moderately in July, August & September after the announcement of Brexit.
2.1: The Implications of a Post-Brexit Britain

On the other hand, many travel decisions for the third & fourth quarter of the year would have been scheduled and paid for prior to the fall in the pound, making this data irrelevant to some extent.

Further insight from Visit Britain suggests that flight arrivals to the UK for November, December and early 2017 are likely to be up year-on-year, with forecasts on spending set to grow by 8.1% to £24.1 billion. This growth rate is far greater than we have seen in recent years.

The fall in the pound certainly saw an increase in spending power from inbound visitors, however, the ongoing value of the pound is an area of uncertainty, and will depend on a number of key factors including:

Monetary policy actions taken by the Bank of England and EU & trade negotiations
Whilst momentum is currently high and the outlook appears positive from a Government and industry point of view, there are still huge risks at stake when the negotiation and trade deals have been agreed. These implications will affect multiple industries, not only travel, tourism and leisure.

The risks to tourism following EU & trade negotiations could include food prices dramatically rising which will have a knock on effect to dining out in restaurants and hotels.

Inbound visitors from territories like China are well known for their luxury goods buying when in the UK. Should retail prices rise, this will certainly deter inbound tourists who view London as a hot-spot for luxury goods. Fuel prices rising will impact on neighbouring countries who tend to drive over to the UK and could also see airlines increasing their flight prices. Also, from a free-movement point of view, in-bound visitors from Europe would be unable to use their EU medical card meaning an additional expense of medical insurance will be added on to their trip.
Due to some of the currency movements, visiting Britain is tremendous value at the moment. I don’t think we’re concerned about Brexit, but we do want to send a very positive message of welcome and to say that Britain is open for business.”
Just over **38.1 million** tourists are expected to enter the UK in 2017, drawn by celebrations including:

- Hull being crowned as ‘The City of Culture’, 2017
- World Athletics Championships and World Para Athletics Championships
- 70 years of the Edinburgh Festival
- The 25th anniversary of the Premier League

Whilst there can be no accurate prediction on the impact Brexit will have on the future of UK tourism, Britain must begin to seek alternative opportunities that lie outside of the EU.
2.3: Attracting New Markets

With countries such as China & Saudi Arabia entering the top 10 for inbound visitor spend in the UK, the tourism and leisure industry must be proactive in growing these new markets.

Having made visa systems easier in 2016, the UK saw record numbers of Chinese tourists heading to our shores last year, specifically London.

With the Chinese a notoriously high-spending demographic, this is a great indicator to support the ‘London is Open’ message that London Mayor Sadiq Khan has been echoing since the referendum announcement last year.
The Brexit Effect on British Tourism
3.1: Identifying Opportunities

The U.S remains the most valuable inbound travel market for the UK, with over **2.95 million** U.S tourists visiting the UK each year, spending **£2.73 billion**.

However, the value and volume of Chinese tourism has significantly increased over the last ten years. According to statistics gathered by the UK’s tourism board, Visit Britain, **106,578** Chinese nationals visited the UK in 2006. Now, the number stands at nearly **269,875**, seeing an increase post-Brexit.

Whilst the number of Chinese visitors to the UK has increased drastically, the market has not yet matured. In fact, the UK is not doing enough to aid the growth of Chinese inbound tourism, despite there being many reasons to do so.

This has been recognised by Visit Britain as they have a strategy in place that aims to increase Chinese spend to **1 billion** by 2020.
3.1: Identifying Opportunities

To encourage more Chinese nationals to visit, businesses operating within the UK’s tourism and leisure industry must address the main barriers that deter them.

Before putting any marketing strategy in place, UK businesses must take the time to understand whom they are trying to communicate with.

- The digital landscape is much more complex in China, which has resulted in a significant lack of online engagement within this particular market.
- The needs and behaviours of the average Chinese tourist are also frequently misunderstood. This threatens to hinder marketing strategies that have been put in place.
- Culture and language barriers make it increasingly difficult for businesses to successfully market themselves.
Whilst a large percentage of Chinese tourists visit the UK on business, a growing amount travel for pleasure. Those who come to the UK for a holiday are usually of a younger age demographic, compared to business-related visitors.

Chinese visitors often have a very positive view of Britain. Research conducted by Visit Britain revealed that the Chinese are more likely to romanticise the UK when compared with inbound visitors from different countries.

Statistics show that the average Chinese tourist will stay longer than any other international visitor, spending 15 nights in the UK compared to 8. This is due to the long haul flight.
3.3: The New Wave of Chinese Millennials

It is important that the UK tourism industry does not overlook this particular demographic by regarding them in the same way they would a UK millennial. There are significant differences between the two.

Key Points

66% of China’s outbound tourism is made up of affluent millennials who account for half of all Chinese outbound spending

A larger majority of Chinese visitors come to the UK for a holiday instead of business reasons

There has been a significant rise in the number of Chinese visitors travelling alone instead of agency organised groups

80% of Chinese tourists pre-plan activities before travelling

Chinese tourists stay for 15 nights on average, nearly double the length of international visitors
3.3: The New Wave of Chinese Millennials

Higher incomes and a growing middle-class mean that millions of Chinese now take their holidays overseas, partially accounting for the rise in visits to the UK. The expansion of middle-class Chinese millennials in particular, has challenged the stereotype of ‘traditional’ Chinese tourists.

Firstly, this group are willing to travel alone. Historically, a large percentage of Chinese visitors, around 70%, travelled through agency organised groups. This is mainly due to language barriers, visa difficulties and fear of the unknown. In comparison, Chinese millennials are more connected with the rest of the world, which makes them far more confident when it comes to travel. The biggest impact of the growing Chinese middle-class millennials is reflected in their spending habits.

Dubbed as the new ‘consuming’ class, China’s younger generation (those born after 1980) make up 40% of its population.
Firstly, the Chinese culture shuns the Westernised concept of borrowing, which means that Chinese millennials are not crippled by student loans or overdrafts. For most of these millennials, their further education is paid for by their parents. In addition, Chinese millennials also escape the burden of saving to buy their own property as it is usually purchased in cash and viewed as a family investment. It is not considered unusual for adults to remain living in the family home as more often than not homes are then inherited.

With no outstanding debts or financial commitments, Chinese millennials are left with a large amount of disposable income; and they are more than happy to spend it. According to the China National Administration of Tourism, in 2015, **two-thirds of Chinese outbound tourists were millennials and they accounted for half of all Chinese outbound spending.**
3.3: The New Wave of Chinese Millennials

The growing number of middle-class millennials along with the increase in the number of Chinese citizens choosing to holiday abroad, means that there has never been a better time for businesses within the tourism industry to promote themselves. With the shift from business travel to personal travel, Chinese visitors are more likely to book hotels, restaurants and attractions for longer periods of time and in greater quantities.

However, with 80% of Chinese tourists pre-planning activities before they travel via the internet and social media, it is important that UK businesses develop an engaging online presence.
In 2015, national statistics projected that the expenditure of Chinese tourists produced **£586.22 million** overall, with **£239.4 million** spent by those travelling for leisure rather than business.

High-end hotels are unlikely to benefit from the rising number of Chinese tourists as they tend to choose 3* hotels over luxury. Chinese visitors are also more likely to spend their money on hotels that have a tech focus. For example, rooms with docking stations and WIFI.

The visitor attractions that are most appealing to Chinese tourists are museums and beauty spots, such as parks and nature reserves. They opt to spend their money in these types of places, purchasing admission tickets, souvenirs, food & drink. As the world’s biggest buyers of high-end goods, Chinese tourists are very likely to make time for retail therapy, spending hundreds of pounds on Britain’s highstreets. Seeking luxury brands, they often make purchases for themselves and for friends and families back home.

After the Brexit result in 2016, Britain saw a surge of Chinese visitors, all looking to take advantage of the decreasing value of the GBP. Prior to Brexit, the average spend within the UK’s retail sector had fallen by 14%.
While experts agree that the continuation of the weakening pound will attract high volumes of Chinese tourists in 2017, the long-term forecast is uncertain. It has been suggested that if the UK is unable to negotiate competitive trade deals, Chinese tourists may be more drawn towards countries such as France, Germany and Italy, where high-end luxury brands may be available for a more competitive price. One way to lessen the impact of the uncertain GBP is for the UK to start promoting goods that are ‘Made in Britain.’ If the UK can start to promote themselves as a destination that sells unique products, it may be able to compete with EU countries more convincingly.
Engaging the Chinese Market: A Digital Approach
4.1: Overcoming Language Barriers

Ever since the Chinese marketplace started to gain momentum, tourism boards and businesses in the UK have turned their attention to effective marketing strategies and campaigns. But what are the key challenges that these strategies aim to address?

Although some Chinese citizens speak and/or read English, many do not.

A large majority will also have trouble with spoken pronunciation and understanding the various dialects that are widespread across the UK. This can create an unwelcoming atmosphere. So, how can the language barrier stunt the overall growth of China’s outbound tourism to the UK?

Firstly, it makes planning a trip to the UK as an individual extremely difficult. Researching the hotels, attractions and restaurants they wish to visit, becomes a longer and more complicated process. This explains why a large percentage of Chinese tourists still book through a travel operator.
4.1: Overcoming Language Barriers

Secondly, in terms of booking hospitality and leisure activities, if a website does not offer the option to translate content and/or has failed to implement a straightforward online booking system, it can result in custom being lost. Booking by phone can also result in further communication issues if the venue in question does not employ Mandarin speaking staff members, there is also a vast time difference in play.

Following this, Chinese visitors may question their overall experience and value for money if the hotels and attractions that they want to visit consistently fail to cater for their needs.
Visit Britain, the UK’s national tourism agency continues to work on their ‘GREAT China Welcome’ programme. The programme aims to aid Chinese visitors in finding the leading UK businesses within the tourism industry that have taken special measures to cater to Chinese travellers. These businesses appear on The GREAT China Welcome Charter.

To qualify, businesses must:

• meet specific criteria for example; have first-hand experience in welcoming Chinese visitors within the last two years
• employ Mandarin speaking staff
• accept the Union Pay card or have literature or signage in Mandarin.

Any business, from hotels to restaurants can be involved. This type of UK wide campaign aims to take away language complications and make Chinese guests feel welcomed into the country.
While 300 business have signed up to the Charter, this is an extremely low number in relation to the number of businesses that fall into the tourism sector.

The number of hospitality businesses that feature on the published Charter totals 90.

Of these, London accounted for 35.56% of participants.

Scotland accounted for 6.82%

When split across countries, 93.18% of independent hotels that feature on the charter are represented by England.

Hotels and businesses in Wales and Northern Ireland do not appear on the Charter at all.
A Reckless Insight

When analysing tourist attractions in the UK that are featured on the Charter, statistics mirror that of the hospitality industry.

Attractions based in London make up 28.07% of participating business on the Charter.

Although Scotland and Wales are better represented in comparison to hoteliers, tourism businesses in Northern Ireland are still not present. Once more, tourist attractions in England provide the most representation with 72.81% tourist attractions featured. 17.54% of the tourist attractions listed are situated in Scotland, 8.77% in Wales and 0% in Northern Ireland.

The GREAT China Welcome Charter would be more effective if there was an evenly spread distribution of participants. Although a large majority of Chinese tourists visit London they enjoy visiting historical cities and towns and appreciate the quintessentially British landscape. For example, the Lake District attracts many Chinese tourists each year due to its picturesque views. The UK has much to offer in terms of appealing places to visit. However, as a whole, the UK is failing to promote alternative places of interest.
A Reckless Insight

Breakdown of Hotels in The GREAT China Welcome Charter (%)

Breakdown Tourist Attractions in The GREAT China Welcome Charter (%)
On finding that 4% of visitors to Royal Museums Greenwich are Chinese tourists, the Museum chose to tailor their marketing campaigns, taking more steps to accommodate them. In November 2016, they joined forces with China Travel Outbound, a specialist travel PR and representation agency. Their aim is to maintain and increase the number of Chinese visitors to its other three museums, which include the National Maritime Museum, the Queen’s House and the Cutty Sark.

In doing this, Royal Museums Greenwich will gain better exposure in China by promoting themselves in conjunction with Chinese Travel Agents and trade communications. By raising brand awareness within China itself, Chinese visitors are more likely to factor in a trip to one of their museums. In addition, promotional literature and visitor information packs will be printed in Mandarin, taking away some of the language difficulties.
Tailoring marketing campaigns to appeal to Chinese tourists is an effective strategy, especially if the business in question resides in a location where Chinese tourism is rapidly increasing.

Gaining exposure within China is extremely difficult, as they do not use the same social media channels as we do in the UK. Working with a specialist Chinese travel PR agency and collaborating with Chinese tour operators is a way of ensuring that your targeted campaign reaches the desired audience, which can be costly.

Smaller businesses may not consider this an option; however, if smaller businesses form alliances with other small businesses within the same industry, marketing strategies like this are possible. For example, Blenheim Palace, a noted place of interest for Chinese tourists, share their marketing efforts with Bicester Village outlet shopping, thus dividing the associated costs.
Engaging potential Chinese tourists on social media has many obstacles. Popular UK social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook are banned in China and Google is not a widely used search engine.

The majority of the Chinese population, around 50%, will use a popular search engine called Baidu, to research information. Although Baidu is much the same as the Google Search engine in principle, search engine optimisation works very differently.
4.2: Addressing the Changes in Digital

The ranking algorithms differ between the two and do not align when it comes to setting guidelines. For example, Baidu will prioritise a website that has more backlinks; any backlinks. In contrast, Google will penalise a website that has too many backlinks, flagging it as spam and putting it further down the rankings. Websites that appear to include poor quality and/or paid links may even face a penalty fine.

Aside from the differences in SEO ranking algorithms, UK based companies may find that promoting their business via a dedicated website in China comes at a high price. Any website without a .cn domain name may incur a penalty and Baidu gives precedence to websites that are hosted within mainland China due to the strict internet censorship. In addition, Baidu prefers all website content to be written in Mandarin. Due to the level of differentiation, a UK based company would therefore be encouraged to have a separate top-level domain as well as a separate SEO strategy. UK based companies who want to specifically target China are encouraged to consider whether running an effective PPC strategy is more realistic. Unlike SEO, PPC bypasses the ranking algorithms as the account owner is paying Baidu to promote their service. There are disadvantages however as many people in China trust organic content as opposed to paid links, resulting in limited conversions. Due to the uncertainty of SEO and PPC strategies and the on-going cost that is associated with them, many companies feel uneasy about investing.
In 2016, Edinburgh attracted record numbers of Chinese visitors. Official tourism figures show that the Chinese visitor spend in Scotland has now exceeded $43 million. Over the last three years alone, Edinburgh Castle has welcomed 160,000 Chinese tourists. In light of this, The Edinburgh Tourism Action Group has launched their first ever social media campaign in China.

Recognising the extent of the level of reach available via Chinese social media channels, Weibo and WeChat, nineteen businesses have joined forces. Working with a £40,000 funding boost from Visit Scotland, the companies involved will deliver an online campaign that promotes the city’s unique history and culture to the Weibo and WeChat community. The new initiative is said to have promising results, increasing the levels of tourism in Scotland.
A Reckless Insight

Utilising Chinese social media accounts is an effective way of elevating brand awareness. With over 222 million monthly active users on Weibo (a microblogging site that is described as a hybrid between Twitter and Facebook) it offers UK businesses the opportunity to communicate with a mass audience. Unlike SEO and PPC, this can be executed with relatively low costs associated with it.

However, when the top rated attractions in the UK’s capital cities are analysed in relation to their presence on Weibo, it revealed that these tourist attractions are still failing to utilise the channel. Of the top ten rated attractions in London, 80% held a Weibo account, which is an encouraging statistic. In contrast, however, only two of the top rated attractions in Belfast can be found on Weibo. In conclusion, for the UK tourism industry to maintain a mass audience, all attractions across the UK must start to consider the Chinese audience within their digital marketing strategy.
Summary

The decision to leave the EU has led businesses across the UK to consider whether they should look for growth opportunities away from domestic markets.

For businesses within the leisure and hospitality industry, the Chinese market is one that can certainly be cultivated. Some steps have already been made by organisations such as Visit Britain, encouraging businesses within the industry to cater more effectively to the needs of Chinese tourists.

However, as a sector, it can still position itself more successfully by developing a better understanding of who they are trying to engage with and by exploring alternative marketing strategies.

This is the ideal time for the UK’s leisure and hospitality industry to specifically target the Chinese market; taking full advantage of the increasing number of visitors following Brexit.
About Reckless

Founded in 2007, Reckless was born out of a passion to create more engaging digital experiences, pulling brands and customers closer together. Nine years on, Reckless has matured into an award-winning digital marketing agency with offices in Chester, London and Paris. We are proud of the clients we work with and the projects we create, forging lasting relationships to develop their digital offering and truly understand their own customers needs.

Our passion is people. We love learning about what makes them tick, what keeps them close to you and developing digital experiences that keep them engaged with your brand.

We look to convert today and retain tomorrow. To learn more about Reckless, including our work, our team and insight publications visit www.reckless.agency
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